

# Crook Peak

Postcode (nearby): BS26 2HW

UK Grid Ref: ST 392 550

what3words: ///pulsing.currently.starting

Crook Peak is one of the largest areas of open land on the Mendips. It rises 191m above the Levels and has breath taking views over Somerset. This site together with Cross Plain and Shute Shelve Hill are owned by the National Trust.

## Overview

There are a wide range of habitats including semi-natural broadleaved woodland, unimproved calcareous grassland and a complex mosaic of calcareous grassland and acidic dry dwarf-shrub heath, some with a restricted distribution in Britain. Paths are very steep in places and can be very muddy and slippery when wet. Walking shoes are recommended.

## Key Species

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Dark Green Fritillary, Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Green Hairstreak, Brown Argus, Grayling, Wall Brown.

## Directions & Parking

Entrance is on the road between the villages of Cross and Loxton towards the Webbington Hotel. Recommended to park at the lay-by on the Webbington Road at ST 392 550.

## Walk

The walk starts at the NT information board opposite the layby. Pass through the gate on your right-hand side and explore the grassland area on the left for Skippers and Blues.

After about 500m you come to a kissing gate which leads up the main spine of the hill. However, the butterfly walk turns right through an area of grassland and rocks. The path goes downhill and overlooks Compton Bishop. At the fork near the wall bear left uphill through a wooded area.

This leads to a more open grassy path bordered by banks of bramble where many species find nectar. The path continues through a second kissing gate and wooded area.

Take a path to the right with a kissing gate which climbs slightly towards Combe Bungalow to the north of Compton Bishop. This is a good area for **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Marbled White** and **Grayling**.

At the bungalow turn left. On the lower part of the steep stony path **Dingy** and **Grizzled Skippers** are found in May and June. There are also **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** **Small Heath**, **Green Hairstreak** and **Common Blue**.

Follow the wall towards the peak itself by turning left. Walk around the peak.

The last part of the walk is a descent down the side of the grassy spur. Butterflies to be seen here include **Grayling** and **Wall Brown**. The route then re-joins the original path back to where cars are parked.

This page has been extracted and updated from the Butterfly Walks in Somerset & Bristol (2015) booklet. Please let the branch know if you find any details need updating.

On a fine day there are spectacular views from the top of Crook Peak. To the west are the Brecon Beacons; to the south-west is Exmoor. To the south-east are the Somerset Levels and Glastonbury Tor.

In addition to butterflies there is a lot of other interesting wildlife on Crook Peak. The shallow calcareous soils support the nationally rare Somerset Hair Grass, Honewort, Cheddar Pink and the Cheddar Bedstraw. Fascinating cave deposits at Picken's Hole at the southern tip of Crook Peak include Spotted Hyaena, Lion, Arctic Fox, Mammoth and Woolly Rhino. It is the most carefully excavated hyaena-den site in Britain. (HR)

### Useful Links

National Trust – Mendip Hills. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mendip-hills>

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